



Ohio Workforce Coalition

Growing Ohio's Economy
with a Skilled Adult Workforce

The Ohio Workforce Coalition 2009 Public Policy Platform

BUILD THE SKILLS OF ADULT WORKERS • MEET EMPLOYER SKILL NEEDS • STRENGTHEN THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

The Ohio Workforce Coalition believes that a skilled adult workforce is crucial for Ohio's economic recovery: to strengthen businesses, create and retain jobs, and ensure opportunity and prosperity for families. For that reason, the Coalition promotes public policies that build the skills of Ohio's adult workers.

ADDRESSING THE REALITIES OF THE OHIO ECONOMY

The national economic crisis has increased the trajectory of economic restructuring in Ohio¹

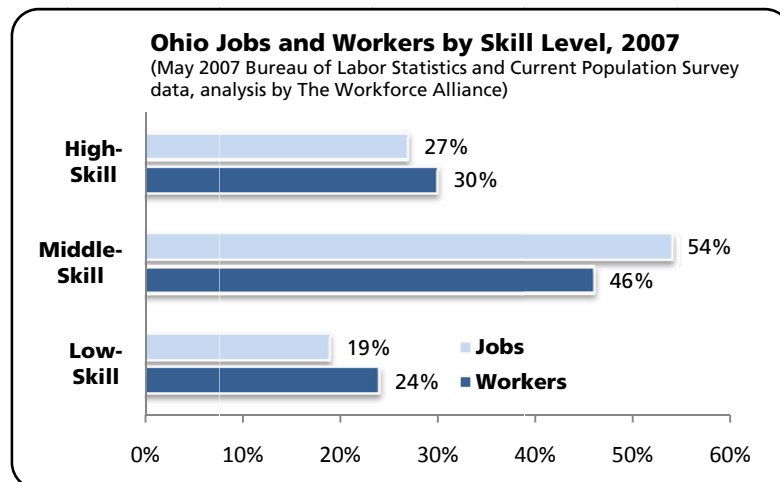
The pattern of Ohio's employment restructuring looks much the same in 2009 as it did early in the decade—steep losses of manufacturing jobs and job increases in the service sectors, particularly education and health, professional and business services, transportation and utilities, and leisure and hospitality. However, the recent economic downturn has increased the pace of manufacturing job loss and slowed or reversed growth in government, wholesale and retail trade, and information services.

A rapidly growing number of Ohio adults do not have the skills needed in the job market

The Ohio workforce starts with a baseline of education and training deficits. Nearly half (45%) of all adults of prime working age (25-54)—2.1 million Ohio adults—have *no postsecondary education*. This skill shortage has increased with the addition of thousands of adults who have recently lost their jobs. They may have had the skills needed for their previous jobs, but now need retraining to be competitive in a changing job market. For example, even with large job losses in manufacturing, there are thousands of annual job openings in this sector each year. However, Ohio employers need workers with new skills in specific advanced manufacturing equipment and processes. The worker who lost a retail job requires retraining to be qualified for a job in the growing health care sector. Anticipated federal funds for infrastructure development and green manufacturing will provide opportunities only for Ohioans with relevant skills.

Good jobs are available for workers with education and training below a bachelor's degree

In-demand technical skills, which in many cases require a year or less of education and training, are within the reach of Ohio's adult workers. Many of the job openings in Ohio are for workers with education and training above a high school diploma, but below a bachelor's degree. It is estimated that Ohio produces more of these "middle-skill" jobs (54% of total jobs) than there are workers who have the education and training required to fill these positions (46% of workforce). These jobs typically pay above the state median wage for workers with at least moderate-term on-the-job training, related work experience, a postsecondary vocational award, or an associate's degree.



¹ Data Sources: Ohio industry and occupation trends: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Labor Market Information publications ; adult education attainment, U.S. Census Bureau

State programs can play a crucial role in fast-tracking the training and retraining of adult workers

Ohio's low-skilled and unemployed workers need the help of the state of Ohio to move quickly into, and successfully complete, the education and training needed to obtain in-demand jobs. The Ohio Workforce Coalition has identified critical policy reforms that Ohio can adopt to improve training services for adult workers and their employers, help adults access education and training, and make better use of available state and federal resources. These include strategies to make current programs and resources work better, with a focus on adults seeking short-term, technical and career certificates or two-year degrees, and employers seeking resources for on-the-job training. The recommendations are intended to augment the work already underway by the Strickland administration to reorganize and strengthen the state's postsecondary education and workforce development programs and systems.

What the state of Ohio can do now

The Ohio Workforce Coalition's 2009 Public Policy Platform—endorsed by more than 90 employers, economic development organizations, labor unions, education and training institutions, workforce development organizations, and human service providers—offers the following set of recommendations. These specific, practical recommendations, based on national best practices, are made with a full realization of the state's budget crisis and generally *assume no new funding*, but rather more targeted and effective use of existing resources.

- A) **Improve reemployment services for laid-off workers.** Reform Ohio's Rapid Response system to better meet the needs of dislocated workers and put them back to work as quickly as possible in high-demand occupations paying family-sustaining wages.
- B) **Reduce costs for adults pursuing education and training.** Make state financial aid work better for adults, freeze community college tuition, and use more WIA funds for worker training.
- C) **Expand the concept of "internship" to provide job experience for adults.** Ensure that the Ohio Co-op and Internship Program is available to all Ohioans enrolled in postsecondary education and training, and assists smaller employers to hire interns.
- D) **Access, and make effective use of, all available adult workforce development resources.** Invest sufficient state and federal resources in education, training, and employment services and ensure that programs benefit a wide range of adult workers, while meeting the needs of employers.

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A) Improve reemployment services for laid-off workers. Reform Ohio's Rapid Response system to better meet the needs of dislocated workers and put them back to work as quickly as possible in high-demand occupations paying family sustaining wages.

States are required by the Workforce Investment Act to establish a Rapid Response system to provide services to avert layoffs and enable dislocated workers to find new jobs. Too often Ohio's response to layoffs has fallen short, leaving dislocated workers underserved and available resources unspent or redirected for other uses. Ohio suffers from an overly decentralized system that lacks clear expectations for local partners, broken lines of authority and communication from the state, and insufficient technical assistance and resources to ensure delivery of appropriate services. In light of these challenges, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is rolling out a plan to ensure a consistent, statewide approach to delivering Rapid Response services, in compliance with federal requirements. We recommend that any reforms to the Rapid Response system clarify the roles of state and local partners, incorporate evidence-based practices, and improve data collection systems.

1. Redefine the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the state and local partners in responding to layoffs.

- a. Maintain a flexible pool of resources comprised of unobligated state and local funds that can be reallocated to areas in need, and ensure that resources are available during a severe economic downturn.²
- b. Define acceptable standards of Rapid Response service delivery.
- c. Reform the Rapid Response funding system and require local WIA areas that want to deliver Rapid Response services to sign a contract with the state. If a local area does not have an acceptable track record or is unlikely to provide adequate standards of service, then the state should conduct an RFP process that allows One-Stop partners, as well as WIBs from adjacent WIA areas, to bid for the contract to become the service provider for that area.³
- d. Set measurable and enforceable goals in the contract or grant agreements for the delivery of services and for outcomes for workers.
- e. Clarify the role, responsibilities, and expectations of the United Labor Agency in delivering services and collaborating with the state and local service providers.

2. Collect and use "evidence-based practices" for responding to layoffs.

- a. Develop evidence-based practices with input from dislocated workers, employers, and One-Stop partners.⁴
- b. Deliver ongoing, required technical assistance and training to local service providers and One-Stop partners on the use of evidence-based practices.
- c. Set performance goals for delivering evidence-based practices.⁵

3. Invest in a new state data system that:

- a. Increases communication between the state and local service providers during a Rapid Response event.
- b. Tracks outcomes for all individuals involved in layoffs, not just individuals who received Rapid Response services or continued to WIA services. The workforce system should be able to show how many individuals retired, how many found jobs or training on their own, and how many went through WIA or other public services.
- c. Provides training program completion and employment outcome information about eligible training provider organizations, and makes the information available to dislocated workers.
- d. Interfaces with the Unemployment Insurance (UI) system so that Rapid Response services and training programs can be marketed to the UI caseload.

² We recommend that ODJFS reviews the results of all special projects and programs funded with Rapid Response and focus resources on Rapid Response service delivery to the greatest extent possible.

³ Local workforce areas that opt out of delivering Rapid Response should not be penalized for this decision. The state should recognize that local areas have different core competencies and may choose to focus on what they do best. On the other hand, the state should consider bidding out services if it determines that a local area is unable to perform at an acceptable level.

⁴ We recommend that ODJFS conduct focus groups with dislocated workers who have successfully secured employment, those who are still unemployed, and employers (those who have laid off workers and who have hired dislocated workers) to seek their input on effective Rapid Response services. The department should also seek the input of national experts and successful programs on how to structure supportive services to create good retraining outcomes.

⁵ Local service providers also will be held accountable to the performance measures dictated by the federal government.

B) Reduce costs for adults pursuing education and training. Make state financial aid work better for adults, freeze community college tuition, and use more WIA funds for worker training.

In FY 2006 the state expanded need-based financial aid to part-time college students, and the FY 2008-09 budget offered increased state resources to colleges that froze tuition levels over the 2-year period. Yet many Ohio workers still cannot afford postsecondary education and training. For instance, it costs nearly \$15,000 a year to attend a community college, including expenses for housing, food, transportation, and other basic needs.⁶ Federal and state financial aid falls well short of the mark,⁷ particularly for adult learners⁸ and those enrolled in certificate programs⁹. Meanwhile, relatively few Ohio adults receive the tuition assistance that could be funded through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).¹⁰ Ohio's projected budget shortfall and rising demand for financial aid¹¹ is causing the Ohio Board of Regents to consider a wide range of cost-saving changes to the Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG), the state financial aid program. We recommend that Ohio expand access to OCOG for adult students and those in certificate programs, freeze community college tuition, and use additional WIA funds for training subsidies.

1. Expand access to OCOG aid for adult learners and students in certificate programs.

- a. Provide adults (independent students) with the equivalent level of OCOG aid available to traditional-age (dependent) students with similar household resources.¹²
- b. Permit OCOG funds to be used for occupational certificate programs for in-demand jobs, including those identified by the Ohio Skills Bank initiative.¹³
- c. Establish parity in OCOG aid regardless of type of school attended (public, private, proprietary),¹⁴ and use the cost savings to expand aid for adults and to ensure that changes in the OCOG formula do not disproportionately impact the neediest students.¹⁵

2. Extend the current tuition freeze at community colleges through FY 2011¹⁶

3. Establish a statewide baseline for the amount, and expected outcomes, of WIA funds spent on training and intensive services for adults and dislocated workers.

- a. Establish uniform, statewide definitions for WIA training services (i.e., individual training account and on-the-job training) and intensive services.
- b. Collect local and area data on: i) the amount of WIA funds used for training and intensive services for adults and dislocated workers; ii) the services delivered; and iii) employment and training outcomes and employers served.
- c. Based on the data analysis, establish an appropriate statewide baseline or baselines for the portion of WIA funds that local areas and counties should spend on training and intensive services for adults and dislocated workers and the employment and training outcomes achieved.

⁶ Analysis by The College Board in *Trends in College Pricing 2008*.

⁷ A full-time student attending a public institution currently qualifies for up to \$6,806 when combining OCOG and the Pell grant.

⁸ Adults with dependent children usually qualify for far less aid than traditional-age (dependent) students. Recent federal legislation reformed the federal needs analysis for the Pell grant (and, therefore, OCOG) to ensure parity in aid for only the neediest dependent and independent students (households earning less than \$30,000 who qualify for the maximum award).

⁹ Students enrolled in certificate programs do not currently qualify for OCOG (Pell covers certain certificates).

¹⁰ In Program Year 2007, Ohio used WIA funds to pay for training for 13,083 low-income adults and dislocated workers.

¹¹ According to Board of Regents projections for "duplicated" recipients and "unduplicated" public institution recipients, OCOG enrollment could grow by as much as 30% from FY 2008 to FY 2010.

¹² We recommend increasing the amount of OCOG aid available to independent students (i.e. adults with children) by forgiving a portion of their expected family contribution so that their revised OCOG award is equivalent, or nearly equivalent, to the award for a traditional-age (18-22) dependent student in a family with similar financial needs.

¹³ We recommend including for-credit and noncredit middle-skill occupational certificates that articulate to the University System of Ohio, which may be delivered by public and private colleges, adult career centers, and proprietary schools.

¹⁴ We recommend capping OCOG aid for students attending public, private, or proprietary institutions at no more than the current maximum award levels for students attending 2- and 4-year public institutions. Doing so would put the maximum OCOG award at \$2,496 for full-time, full-year enrollment. Under the current funding formula, students attending public institutions qualify for half as much OCOG aid as do private college students (\$4,992), and less than two-thirds the amount awarded to proprietary school students (\$3,996). Nearly three-quarters of state financial aid recipients attend public institutions (82,551 of 115,140 of OCOG or OIG recipients in 2008), yet, disproportionately, almost half of state financial aid resources go to private and proprietary school students. Leveling the funding formula would produce a savings of \$37 million, 20% of state financial aid budget, while affecting relatively few students. Reinvesting the funds in OCOG should enable Ohio to extend eligibility to certificate and independent students, preserve adequate aid for the neediest families, and meet the rising demand for aid.

¹⁵ Currently, 60% of OCOG recipients have an expected family contribution of \$0, qualifying them for the maximum award.

¹⁶ We recommend providing community colleges with increased state subsidy in return for freezing tuition rates.

C) Expand the concept of “internship” to provide job experience for adults. Ensure that the Ohio Co-op and Internship Program is available to all Ohioans enrolled in postsecondary education and training and assists smaller employers to hire interns.

The \$1.57 billion Ohio Jobs Stimulus bill (HB 554) enacted in June 2008 includes \$250 million for the Ohio Co-op and Internship Program (OCIP), a 5-year initiative to expand cooperative education and internship opportunities for college students. As enacted, the initiative instructs the Board of Regents to award funds to institutions of higher education to operate co-op/internship programs and offer scholarships, with a focus on baccalaureate and master’s degree students. In order to participate in the program, employers are expected to match the state funds awarded to colleges in the form of student wages and related costs. To ensure that OCIP meets the needs of a range of employers and students, we recommend that there be an expanded focus on students pursuing middle-skill jobs, especially adult learners, and that a portion of the funds be permitted to subsidize the cost of student wages.

1. Develop co-operative education, internship, apprenticeship, and other work-study opportunities for all University System of Ohio students.

- a. Promote apprenticeship, along with co-operative education and internship, as an effective work-study model.¹⁷
- b. Ensure access to OCIP programming for students seeking two-year degrees or occupational certificates¹⁸ at institutions within the University System of Ohio¹⁹.
- c. Give preference to proposals that build linkages between certificate and degree programs to encourage students to pursue further education.²⁰

2. Permit some funding to be used to enable smaller employers to hire OCIP students and fill their skilled workforce shortages.

- a. Provide small- to medium-size private, non-profit, and public sector employers with a subsidy for a portion of the wages²¹ of OCIP students, enabling more employers to participate and discover the value of hiring co-ops, interns, and apprentices.²²
- b. Give preference for the wage subsidy to employers hiring specific student populations, including dislocated workers, minorities, veterans, and low- and middle-skill adults.²³
- c. Give preference to proposals that seek to fill employers’ shortage of skilled workers in current or projected in-demand occupations, including those identified through the Ohio Skills Bank initiative.²⁴

¹⁷ In ORC, Sec. 3333.71-80, we recommend adding references to “apprenticeship programs” in all provisions referencing co-op/internship programs. In ORC, Sec. 3333.71, add provision (E): “apprenticeship program means a partnership between students, apprenticeship sponsors, and institutions within the University System of Ohio that formally integrates instruction of occupational skills and knowledge with full-time work experience and on-the-job training that prepares students for careers in an industry and meets the following conditions: (1) provides students with compensation from apprenticeship sponsor in the form of wages or salaries for work performed; (2) results in a certificate of completion that is industry recognized; (3) may provide participating students with academic credit upon successful completion of their apprenticeship; (4) may be part of an overall degree program acceptable to the chancellor of the Ohio board of regents.” In ORC, Sec. 3333.71, add provision (E): “apprenticeship sponsor is an organization that operates an apprenticeship program, including but not limited to an employer, a group of employers, or a labor-management committee for several employers.”

¹⁸ In ORC, Sec. 3333.71-80, we recommend revising references to “certificate programs” to “for-credit and noncredit certificate programs that articulate to the University System of Ohio.”

¹⁹ In ORC, Sec. 3333.71-80, we recommend replacing all references to “institutions of higher education” with “institutions within the University System of Ohio.”

²⁰ In ORC, Sec. 3333.73, we recommend revising provision (O) to state “The extent to which the proposal will create linkages between a degree or certificate program offered by a University System of Ohio institution with a degree or certificate program offered by another University System of Ohio institution, to encourage students to pursue further education in support of lifelong learning.”

²¹ In ORC, Sec. 3333.74, we recommend revising provision (B) to “The chancellor of the Ohio board of regents shall require education institutions receiving initiative funds to reimburse employers affected by division (A) of this section, at a rate equaling fifty percent of student wages.”

²² In ORC, Sec. 3333.73, we recommend adding provision (T): “The extent to which the proposal helps companies, both individually and collectively, learn the value that participating in the OCIP initiative has on the short- and long-term growth of their businesses, so that the companies will continue to employ co-operative students, interns, and apprentices after the initiative concludes.”

²³ In ORC, Sec. 3333.74, provision (B) we recommend listing as exceptional circumstances the hiring by small to medium-sized employers of dislocated workers, minorities, veterans, and low- to middle-skill adults.

²⁴ In ORC, section 3333.73, we recommend adding to provision (S): “or fill a current shortage of skilled workers in current or projected in-demand occupations.”

D) Access, and make effective use of, all available adult workforce development resources. Invest sufficient state and federal resources in education, training, and employment services and ensure that programs benefit a wide range of adult workers, while meeting the needs of employers.

Ohio needs strong institutions, programs, and systems in place to respond to the needs of workers and employers. This requires an adequate federal and state investment. In the coming months, even in the difficult budget situation, the State of Ohio has opportunities to enhance the resources for education and training, including allocating state funds through the FY 2010-11 budget, tapping available federal funds, advocating for additional federal resources, and making better use of existing resources.

1. Ensure that Ohio gets its fair share of federal education, employment services, and job creation resources by: a) tapping all available federal funds; b) advocating for increased federal investments; and c) supporting reforms to existing programs to better serve the needs of Ohio workers and employers. These programs and initiatives currently include:

- a. Federal Economic Recovery Package²⁵
- b. SECTORS Act²⁶
- c. Green Jobs Act²⁷
- d. Second Chance Act²⁸
- e. Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET)²⁹
- f. Higher Education Act³⁰
- g. Workforce Investment Act (WIA)³¹
- h. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- i. Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

2. In the FY 2010-11 state budget, give priority to investing adequate resources in institutions and programs that effectively build the education and skills of adult workers for in-demand jobs.

- a. Target investments to incumbent, dislocated, entry-level, and hard-to-serve workers.
- b. Set outcome measures for delivering evidence-based practices that ensure all workers can succeed in school and work.

3. Continue efforts to streamline employer access to workforce training resources.

- a. Establish uniform, customer-friendly requirements for employers accessing any state and federal training funds for job creation/retention. This funding includes WIA, Targeted Industry Training Grants, Ohio Investment in Training Program, and Workforce Guarantee.
- b. Collect more robust information on the use and outcomes of worker training resources, including: i) the amount of funds awarded per employer and by geographic area, ii) the outcomes of workers trained, and iii) the performance of training providers.
- c. Increase state oversight of the delivery of incumbent worker training, and ensure greater coordination among local partners, including education, workforce, and economic development, in order to respond more effectively and efficiently to the needs of employers.

²⁵ We recommend that federal multibillion-dollar stimulus package include increased funding for TANF, WIA, and Pell grants, and that investments in public works projects include dedicated resources for training workers.

²⁶ We recommend that Congress enact the SECTORS bill, as introduced by Sen. Sherrod Brown, and appropriate the necessary funds. The bill would provide grants for sector partnerships to create customized, regional solutions for specific industries.

²⁷ We recommend that Congress appropriate \$125 million for education and training programs for green-collar jobs, as authorized in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. The targeted green-collar industries include energy efficient building, construction and retrofits, renewable electric power, energy efficient vehicles, biofuels, and manufacturing that produces sustainable products and uses sustainable processes and materials.

²⁸ We recommend that Congress appropriate \$300 million in grant programs to facilitate successful prisoner re-entry, including education and training, as is authorized in legislation enacted in 2008.

²⁹ We recommend that Ohio leverage private and philanthropic resources to count as the required match to draw down additional federal funds for employment and training services to eligible food stamp recipients.

³⁰ We recommend that Congress appropriate the necessary funds, authorized under the 2008 HEA bill, to increase Pell grant awards and launch several new grant programs including Student Success, Bridges from Jobs to Careers, and Business Workforce Partnerships.

³¹ We recommend that Congress renew its commitment for workforce development, by 1) reauthorizing, reforming, and reinvesting in WIA; 2) increasing the state TANF Block Grants; and 3) raising funding levels for the Perkins Act.

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Beverly Williams Odon, Director, Community Initiatives
Dayton

**The University of Akron Wayne College
Continuing Education and Workforce Development**

Amy Mast, Director
Orrville

Upper Valley Joint Vocational School

John Villers, Director, Adult Education
Legislative Chair, Ohio ACTE
Piqua

Vantage Career Center

Jim Grant, Adult Director
Van Wert

Warren County Career Center

Margaret Hess, Superintendent
Thomas Harris, Director, Adult and Community Education
Lebanon

Washington County Career Center

Dewayne Poling, Director of Adult Technical Training
Marietta

Marsha Watts-Visher

Consultant, Lee Hecht Harrison
Developing Inclusive Schools and Community Organizations
Adjunct Instructor, Cincinnati State Technical and
Community College
Cincinnati

Wayne County Schools Career Center

Kip Crain, Superintendent
Bernadette Meyer, Supervisor, Adult & Community Education
Lynn Moomaw, Director of Operations
Smithville

The West Central Ohio Manufacturing Association

Doug Durliat, Director
Daniel Schoch P.E., Chair, Minster Machine
Lima

Workforce Connections of Adams & Brown Counties

Debora Plymail, Director
Winchester

**Workforce Connections of Adams, Brown,
Pike & Scioto Counties**

Rosie Picklesimer, WIB Director, WIA Area #1

Workforce One Investment Board of Southwest Ohio

Jeff Weber, Executive Director, WIA Area 12
Hamilton

WSOS Community Action Commission, Inc.

Kerrie Carte, Development Specialist
Fremont

YWCA of Greater Cincinnati

Charlene Ventura, President and CEO
Eileen Hopkins, Director, Education & Training
Corrie Madden, Coordinator Employment Resources
Cincinnati

**Zane State College
Business and Industry Training**

Bill Whipple, Director
Cambridge